

**Office of Problem Gambling
Stakeholder Meeting
September 27, 2011**

Stakeholder Input Summary:

The majority of comments received were specifically related to the proposed elimination of the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) and the transfer of the Office of Problem Gambling (OPG) to another Department within State government. Concerns were raised about the fiscal impact of relocating OPG; specifically stakeholders asked if OPG's budget would continue to be funded at the current level. There was consensus among the group that OPG should follow other ADP functions when transferred to keep ADP functions together under one umbrella rather than spread across multiple state agencies.

Stakeholders included mostly OPG prevention and treatment partners and contractors, gambling industry representatives and a few members from the Substance Use Disorder (SUD) field as well.

Question 1: What opportunities and/or benefits to problem gambling providers or clients do you see as a result of the proposed elimination of ADP and transfer of OPG?

- Currently, OPG has approved funding from the gambling industry. The hope is that OPG would continue with the current funding allocation. If OPG were moved under another agency, prevention and treatment services should continue at the current level.
- In the future Health Care Reform (HCR) calls for an integration of services. From a clients' perspective, moving OPG with Mental Health (MH) services takes a step in the right direction preparing for HCR, all services should be provided within one umbrella agency. Clients may receive better services if all services are administered by one agency.
- Downsizing the levels of bureaucracy could expedite decision making; agency Directors have more authority.
- Should OPG move under the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), the opportunity may arise to include problem gambling questions on screening forms for MH, SUD and other services as part of HCR.
- If ADP functions move under DHCS, the consensus was there should be two separate deputies – one for SUD and one for MH.
- There is an opportunity to create a Division of OPG; raising the importance of the office in State government.

Question 2: What do you believe will be the greatest challenges for problem gambling providers and clients created by the transfer of OPG? What are your recommendations to address these challenges?

- It is imperative for OPG to retain the current levels of marketing and awareness. If OPG transfers and there is more "red tape" to implement marketing and

awareness clients may not receive necessary services in a timely effective manner.

- Clients may see a decrease in services if OPG is separated from other existing ADP functions.
- Perception of law enforcement agencies is a big barrier; clients associate rehabilitation with a negative consequence (jail for criminal behavior).
- Parity issue is huge and does not address pathological gambling.
- Some answers may overlap with Question 1 above.

Recommendations

- Within the Department of Justice, Bureau of Gambling Control (BGC) law enforcement plus compliance have not operated well together. If all gambling services were merged into a Department of Gaming then maybe resources would be efficiently utilized rather than being separate and often times overlapping.
- In Arizona OPG is under Lottery and in New York OPG is under Medicare Services. It is crucial to maintain the relationships OPG has established in CA regardless of the agency OPG is transferred under. Management of certain agencies may be more sympathetic and understanding to the mission of OPG; this should be a factor in the decision making process. Partnerships are important. It is crucial to understand management philosophies prior to making a decision on where OPG should transfer.
- OPG should have less oversight to enable clear messaging to the public regarding services.
- Reflect on OPG core principles and take into account environmental issues.

Question 3: Within which department or agency should OPG be located, and why?

- Previous stakeholder suggestions for transfer of ADP functions include DHCS, Department of Public Health (DPH), CA Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR), and Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) - specifically DUI program.
- OPG should move under the California Gambling Control Commission thus placing all tribal and cardroom gambling related services under the same agency. It was advised that OPG should remain an independent Office and reporting structure should not have OPG Deputy Director reporting to Executive Director of the CGCC. By keeping OPG separate and independent, clients of OPG could feel comfortable that the addiction services are not being handled by an enforcement or regulatory agency.
- Combine OPG with other ADP functions under DHCS.
- BGC involves incarceration and that is not a good fit for OPG. Comments indicated that OPG should not go under BGC as there are too many restrictions and BGC does not provide treatment or prevention services.
- OPG should remain with the other ADP functions; services go hand in hand. Prevention services should stay together to maintain the level of service currently provided.

- OPG should be independent and self-sustaining. Concern was expressed over the distribution of the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund (IGSDF) should OPG fall under another agency; would the new agency make attempts to redistribute IGSDF that were specifically marked for problem gambling prevention and treatment services?
- Some answers may overlap with Question 1 & 2 above.

Question 4: How can we best continue to involve stakeholders on an ongoing basis?

- Email
- Video Conferencing
- Continue Stakeholder and OPG Advisory Group Meetings

Next steps: OPG will post minutes of this meeting on ADP's website. Stakeholders are encouraged to send in formal letters of recommendations with permission to post on the ADP website at adptransitions@adp.ca.gov.

It was mentioned that other Departments have been asked to provide input to the Governor's Office related to reorganization of state government. State Department structure may look very different next year, some Departments may change drastically.